



## Metropolitan King County Council

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**September 6, 2005**

Joni Earl  
Chief Executive Officer  
Sound Transit  
401 South Jackson St.  
Seattle, Washington 98104

Dear Ms. Earl:

As a member of the Sound Transit Board I am writing today to request that Sound Transit investigate the costs and challenges of building a Streetcar through West Seattle to Downtown, connecting then to the Waterfront Trolley. This line would employ technology similar to the Sound Transit light rail system in Tacoma, which in fact is streetcar technology.

I believe this study would be prudent in light of the possible termination of the Seattle Monorail Project. West Seattle stands to be the neighborhood hit hardest by the loss of the Monorail. Traffic in and out of West Seattle during the commute is extremely congested at this time.

Monorail would provide a dedicated transit right of way out of West Seattle which would be critical in the loss of the Viaduct, either due to construction or an earthquake. If the Viaduct comes down, West Seattle is in danger of being stranded for hours at commute time. Increased reliance on buses can help, but buses will be subject to the same traffic jams as the cars.

We need to be prepared to offer an alternative should the Monorail be shelved. I believe that a streetcar could provide a similar dedicated right of way in and out of West Seattle. Within West Seattle, a streetcar could take the same route as the monorail, with the same stops. This could preserve the planning and the investments that have taken place to date around the Monorail stations.

I ask that Sound Transit investigate whether a streetcar could operate on the West Seattle bridge without taking any lanes of traffic. Perhaps it could take an elevated route, similar to that envisioned for the Monorail.

Once the line crosses the Duwamish I would ask that Sound Transit identify a route by which it could join the E-3 Busway. On the E-3 Busway passengers could transfer at the Lander or Stadium light rail stations, and take light rail north to the Downtown Bus Tunnel, or South to Sea-Tac Airport. The West Seattle Streetcar could then connect to the Waterfront Trolley, and be serviced at the proposed Pioneer Square Trolley Barn.

Financing for the project would be expected to come from local Seattle revenues, not Sound Transit Phase I or Phase 2 revenues. An August poll by Peter Hart reported that 61 percent of Seattle voters interviewed said the Monorail taxes should remain in place to fund a mix of roads and transit projects if the Monorail is canceled. The Legislature would have to act to allow Seattle voters to re-direct the Monorail revenue stream to a project such as a West Seattle Streetcar.

If the Seattle Monorail Project disbands we must be prepared to address the critical transit needs of West Seattle residents. By using technology currently in operation by Sound Transit in Tacoma we can avoid creating a new agency, avoid collecting new taxes, and move quickly toward the goal of serving the people of Seattle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Pelz', with a stylized, looped flourish at the end.

Dwight Pelz, Councilmember  
Metropolitan King County Council, District 5